

Serial No.: 10/092,113  
Examiner: Gopal C. Ray

**In the claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. - 13. (canceled):

14. (Currently Amended) A connector system, comprising:

a Compact Peripheral Component Interconnect (CPCI)-compliant backplane having a plurality of slots, each slot including five front side connector segments (denoted herein as P1 through P5) and five rear side connector segments (denoted herein as rP1 through rP5) that correspond to said front side connector segments, wherein connector holes forming said rP1 and rP2 connector segments correspond to ~~are electrically separated from~~ connector holes forming said [[r]]P1 and [[r]]P2 connector segments but are electrically separated therefrom;

a front side card coupled to said backplane at a particular slot, said front side card operating to carry a plurality of CPCI signals via a front side backplane bus formed to couple said P1 and P2 connector segments of said slots; and

a rear side card coupled to said backplane at said particular slot's rear side connector segments, said rear side card operating to carry at least one user-defined signal via a rear side backplane bus formed to couple said rP1 and rP2 segments of said slots.

15. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one user-defined signal is provided from said rear side card to said front side card via a coupling from between said P3 and rP3 connector segments.

16. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one user-defined signal is provided from said rear side card to said front side card via a coupling from between said P4 and rP4 connector segments.

17. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one user-defined signal is provided from said rear side card to said front side card via a coupling from between said P5 and rP5 connector segments.

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18. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one user-defined signal comprises a Super Frame Indicator (SFI) signal operable to control the operation of a telecommunications rack in which said backplane is deployed.

19. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one user-defined signal comprises an Extended Alarm Signal (EAS) operable to carry a plurality of alarms generated in the operation of a telecommunications rack in which said backplane is deployed.

20. - 21. (canceled):

22. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said connector holes forming said P1 and P2 connector segments are dimensioned to receive ultrashort press-in pins formed at a corresponding connector portion of said front side card.

23. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said connector holes forming said rP1 and rP2 connector segments are dimensioned to receive ultrashort press-in pins formed at a corresponding connector portion of said rear side card.

24. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein an insulating layer is disposed between said connector holes forming said P1 and P2 connector segments and said connector holes forming said rP1 and rP2 connector segments.

25. (Original) The connector system as set forth in claim 14, wherein a physical separation of a predetermined distance is disposed between said connector holes forming said P1 and P2 connector segments and said connector holes forming said rP1 and rP2 connector segments.

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